

BALLET TODAY 1/-

JUNE 1952



MEET VIOLETTA ELVIN on page 10
SPOT the COSTUMES CONTEST page 19

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BALLELOG

WE have a bee (in fact a whole swarm) in our bonnet about scenery! Why is so much of the scenery used in ballet—and particularly the classic ballets—today so unbelievably drab, dull, unimaginative and often ramshackle? The costumes are usually gay, well-thought-out and appropriate; the music fitting; the dancers polished and step-perfect; but the scenery, in more than a few large and small ballet companies, is often a complete let-down of the rest of the production. It is as if the producers said "Oh well, we're giving them good dancing, costumes, arrangements and music—the scenery doesn't matter!" But it *does* matter—it can, for most people, make or mar the performance.

Of course, there are exceptions. The decor for *Bonne-Bouche* and *Pineapple Poll* are particularly good examples (both the work of Osbert Lancaster, incidentally) and the new scenery for both the Sadler's Wells' and the Festival Ballet's *Giselle* is another. But, on the whole, the standard is deplorably low. This does not mean that all scenery needs to be over-elaborate and complicated. Simplicity is often most effective—take the decor of *Symphonic Variations*.

And another thing. Why is both the bad and the good scenery allowed to get so often into such a terribly dilapidated state? One company's original *Giselle* scenery became so dilapidated (in addition to its dullness) that every time we saw the ballet, we lived in deadly fear of the whole thing collapsing in front of our eyes! Very often, ballets that have good, thoughtful scenery soon become lifeless, because after a little while the scenery fades and is not refurbished.

It is time decor was given the importance it deserves when a ballet production is planned. The

atmosphere is often completely lost by the lack of thought and care in the preparation and preservation of the scenery.



Once again, Dudley Harris took our exclusive front cover picture of Violetta Elvin in the costume she wears for the ballet *Life Story* in her first film, "Twice Upon a Time." He can supply readers with copies of this photo of her

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and the full-length on page 11. 10 in. x 8 in. prints cost 5s. each (plus postage) from **BALLET TODAY**.

And may we apologise to Mr. Harris for the printing error in our last issue. On page 9, under his gay photograph of Sheila O'Reilly, we inadvertently credited "Dudley Wallis," instead of "Dudley Harris."

Photo Gallery No. 3 was the work of photographer Houston Rogers who can supply 6 in. x 4 in. prints of the picture. Cost is 5/-, plus postage, from **BALLET TODAY**.

NEXT MONTH

- BALLET IN OPERA — DOES IT FIT ?
- MEET DOMINI CALLAGHAN
- THE DANISH BALLET FESTIVAL
- THE HISTORY OF LA SCALA, MILAN
- RESULTS OF MAY COMPETITION

BALLET TODAY

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This month we welcome to our pages a new overseas correspondent. In future, we shall publish regular news of ballet in Australia supplied by Eugene F. Cusack, who readers will remember wrote a most informative article on Ballet in Australia in our January issue. His first news on page 21 is doubly interesting, since much of it concerns the first appearance in Australia of Walter Gore and Paula Hinton.



Our novel competition on page 19 will test the memories of all balletomanes. How often do we think we know all the costumes worn in our favourite ballets, only to find when confronted with them are not quite so sure? We are looking forward to a record entry for this contest—we shall publish the result in the August issue—and this is only the first of some even more unusual competitions to come in the future.



By the way, have you got that new reader yet? Remember, we're trying hard to keep the price of *Ballet Today* down to one shilling and we can't do it without your help!

TWO GISELLES AT CONVENT GARDEN

GISELLE

Covent Garden. May 14 and 16. Music by Adolphe Adam. Scenario by Théophile Gautier based on a theme by Heinrich Heine. Produced by Nicholas Sergueeff after choreography by Coralli. Scenery and costumes by James Bailey.

IT is a long time since either Margot Fonteyn or Violetta Elvin danced *Giselle* at Covent Garden. So it was extremely interesting to watch them both re-create the role within two days of one another and to see the very different interpretations they gave.

Miss Fonteyn's *Giselle* was, I felt, a very robust and positive portrayal, leaving me, in the first act, with the impression that here was a fairy princess who was playing—though most convincingly—the part of a peasant maid, rather than actually being the simple girl herself. Nevertheless, her charming shyness and roguishness in the opening scene was a delight and the daintiness of her dancing, especially in her duets with Michael Somes as Count Albrecht, was enchanting. Her mad scene, though sincere and dramatic, did not quite convince me, mainly, I think, because it was difficult to believe that the *Giselle* who had appeared so level-headed and unafraid in her earlier dealings with the gamekeeper Hilarion should have all the time been trembling on the brink of madness and so easily lose her reason. In the second act, however, Margot Fonteyn's wonderful lyricism was displayed to greatest advantage and she seemed to take wings and fly round the stage, hardly touching the ground. It was in those moments that she brought tears to the eyes.

The *Giselle* that Miss Elvin gave us was quite a different one. From the moment that she rubbed her face against the richness of the Princess's dress in



(Photo: Baron)

Margot Fonteyn in the second act of "Giselle"

the first act, the suspicion entered our minds that this girl was much more highly strung and emotional than the average peasant and we were not surprised when she overflowed the borderline of reason at the end of the act. Her mad scene sent cold shivers down the spine and here I noticed that the emphasis was on acting rather than dancing in the last moments. And in the second act her softly rounded movements and her convincing mime (especially her look of relief when the dawn came up and she and her lover were released from the Wilis' spell) was polished and satisfying.

The two Albrechts, Michael Somes and Alexis Rassine, were also a contrast in styles. Somes gave more the impression of a devoted and gay lover but did not become so convincingly demented with worry in the later scenes, while Rassine appeared less interested in the lighter and sentimental side of the story early on, but his mime and dancing were most convincing and gripping later.

Beryl Grey and Rosemary Lindsay were competent Queens of the Wilis, though neither's face I felt expressed as much cruelty as one expects from that character. A very pleasant *pas de deux* in Act I was danced by Brian Shaw and Nadia Nerina on the first night and Philip Chatfield and Rowena Jackson on the second. Nerina's was, I thought, the softer interpretation and

Jackson's the more staccato and precise. Philip Chatfield showed a refreshing vigour and youthful abandon, especially in his variations.

And, lastly, a word about the new scenery and costumes which are a great improvement on the original ones. If the cottage in the first act looked a little like the gingerbread house, that could be forgiven, but I found the cumbersome baskets which the peasant girls carried did a lot to take away the grace of their movements.

A MIXED BAG

Sadler's Wells. April 30. *Les Rendez-vous*, *Harlequin in April* and *Pineapple Poll*.

The first mixed programme that the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet gave after their return to England included three very different ballets.

Les Rendez-vous, which was presented against its original simple setting instead of the more elaborate one of recent years, appeared a little passé like a garment that was going out of fashion. Elaine Fifield did not seem entirely happy in her role and I did not think the dancing generally was up to standard. Pirmin Trecu's variation was vigorous and the *pas de trois* of Sheila O'Reilly, Donald Britton and Stanley Holden was amusingly burlesqued but I thought the *pas de six* showed the best teamwork.

Stanley Holden stood out again as the Pierrot in *Harlequin in April*, but the piece generally was a rather unmoving performance.

Pineapple Poll, of course, was a delight! Elaine Fifield, David Poole and Donald Britton shared the honours as Poll, Jasper and Captain Belaye and were well-supported by Stella Claire (Blanche), Sheila O'Reilly (Mrs. Dimple) and the corps de ballet.

INDIAN RECITAL

Shirin Vajifdar, her sisters Khurshed and Roshan, Krishna Kutty, and musicians, recently arrived from India, presented a varied programme in their recital at the French Institute, which was sponsored by the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Besides instructive demonstrations of the Kathak (pure dance) and Kathakali (dance gesture) techniques, they gave excerpts from ballets in their repertoire, and folk and traditional dances.

G.I.

SLAVONIC RHAPSODY

Cambridge Theatre. May 19. Yugoslav State Company.

In a well-mixed programme of the folk dances and songs from the various countries which comprise modern Yugoslavia, I noticed particularly the Greek influence from Macedonia, the Slavonic from the plains bordering Rumania and Hungary and the Turkish from Montenegro. In spite of these wide variations, there was an interesting similarity about some of the dances, none of which was solo.

The music reminded me distantly of the Scottish, particularly when the Eastern bagpipes appeared! The male dancers were outstanding, making an agile and perfectly matched team. The costumes, though splashed occasionally with bright colouring, sometimes made rather a sombre picture.

Altogether, it was a vigorous, rhythmic evening of pure folk dancing.

F.R.

CUT FOR PARTNERS

London Palladium. May 5. The Pauline Grant Ballet. Music by Leroy Anderson. Choreography by Pauline Grant. Decor and costumes by Loudon Saint Hill.

This was the second of the ballet presentations in the London Palladium's variety programmes. It is a charming little divertissement based on the pack of cards, with most appropriate and pleasing costumes and decor and tuneful music. The company, led by Gillian Lynne as the joker, were well-trained and in harmony and Miss Lynne herself gave her usual polished performance.

P.F.

SOIREE DE BALLET

Ernest and Lotte Berk appeared at the Irving Gallery for one night on May 5 in *Soirée de Ballet*, a recital of dance and mime. Their idiom is unusually lively "modern" dance. Lotte is intensely concentrated while Ernest makes his audience feel part of the performance. Both approaches have their charm.

Apparitions, three masked forms controlled by Ernest, is impressive; even more so is *Impressions* in which he portrays in dance objects and themes requested by the audience, and, with permission, the personalities of selected victims. His

Ernest and Lotte Berk



insight is uncanny; I know—I was a victim!

Peter Ury, who composed all the music, provided magnificent extempore accompaniment for *Improvisations*.

L.G.S.

BALLET WORKSHOP

On May 11 three new ballets were presented. *Ronde Finale* by Cecil Bates, a *pas de deux* danced by himself and Mary Munro, displays movements and lifts which are pleasing to the eye; but the whole does not clearly express the stated theme, "She whose love must kill, must find her peace at the river's bed."

In *Farewell*, a divertissement, Peter Darrell uses the movements of Jean Francaix's music to depict the partings of four types of lovers. At times the demands of the music are not met by the choreography. Dominic Callaghan was a charming Coquette.

Living Image, first seen on television in May, 1951, has been recreated for coloured dancers in their idiom, giving a novel and effective realisation to the legend of Narcissus and Echo which is well suited to Leonard Salzedo's music.

L.G.S.

by Lisa Gordon Smith

★ TELEVISION

ON April 29 Christian Simpson produced the full-length *Swan Lake* ballet on television. It soon became obvious that he had profited from his experience in televising *Sleeping Beauty*, but my belief that it is impossible satisfactorily to produce these large-scale classics in this medium remains unchanged.

In this production the *corps de ballet* was greatly reduced and the prince, overtaken by the age of austerity, had but three hopeful fiancées to reject. This did much to reduce the possibilities of muddle on the screen, but it was merely a compromise. Romantic palaces or enchanted woods must have large quantities of attendants or magical beings, just to show how rich everyone is in this seldom-ever-land. If

the facilities do not permit the gentry in the big house to appear wealthy and the 'mysterious forest' enchanted, then the whole idea is better left alone.

On television, too, we were confronted with the 'casé of the cardboard swans'. It is some years since theatrical producers realised that these creatures are temperamentally unsuited to stage life. They buck; they baulk; they have even been known shamefully to paddle on stern foremost! Was our television producer daunted by the bad reputation of these birds? Unfortunately, no. Had they reformed? Not on your life!

I do not recommend that the studio should contain a Real Lake with Real Swans, in the best Drury Lane tradition, but what could be simpler than to use a few feet of filmed swans? The solitary feather left floating on the surface of the lake should have suggested tragedy; but before we could reach

for our handkerchiefs, tragedy was turned to farce by the appearance of a large hand which grappled it up before our very eyes! I realise that a television producer has too much to do and a common-or-house fly would have scarcely enough eyes for his job. But surely, somewhere in the organisation, there is a convocation of brains who could devise a way to ensure that these things just do not happen?

I do not object, in principle, to the importation of foreign artists for special productions, providing they can perform the roles better than British dancers, but why Irene Skorik was brought to London to dance Odette-Odile is incomprehensible. Odile she danced reasonably, if untidily, but Odette is not her role.

But, despite everything, *Swan Lake* was televised as well as such unsuitable material permitted, and the effect of distance gained in some of the scenes was admirable.

Sara Goudard

17



74

jambes! She found the mime very complicated, and disapproved of the use of programme notes, thereby showing her agreement with the great choreographer Gasparo Angiolini, who had been engaged in a controversial correspondence with Noverre on this very subject.

The Venetian public, wrote Sara Goudard, did not like phantoms on the stage, a fashion at that time. She recorded the comments in dialect, of a gondolier who called out during a performance of the ballet-pantomime *Semiramis*: "What's this? Dead people dancing now? There are enough dancers without using ghosts! Sooner or later I'll be seeing my grandfather's spirit?"

Sara Goudard disapproved of the habit of presenting a ballet after an opera. This custom lasted in Italy for a long time.

She tells us of the extraordinary contortions of a *danseuse* at Venice. "It is necessary", she wrote, "for her to become convulsive, to be tormented, to struggle, to get into queer positions, to lean and twist, to fall and be caught." We learn that there were sixty performers in a ballet at Venice, and that a ballet-master was better-paid than an army general. She contrasted the naturalness of Viganò's dances with the artificiality of Le Picq's, for example. "Perhaps", she continued, "the grotesques immortalised by Viganò are more life-like than Noverre's Agamemnon? . . . The Noverres, the Pitrots, the Angiolinis have put too much mime in their ballets. They have given us a false idea of nobility and grandeur."

And here is Sara Goudard at Florence. "Mademoiselle Teresa Banti, *première danseuse*, has talent and is pretty. *Terre à terre*, she is noted for her *grand ronds de jambes*. The Italians are absolute furies and devils in mime; but if one loads them with *cabrioles* no

WHO was she? We do not know exactly. But according to her books she led a rather odd life. Although she was married to a very ordinary man, she, herself, was nevertheless in touch with some of the great figures of her time. She travelled widely, and when in Italy was a regular theatre-goer.

Here are some facts about this strange couple which we have gleaned from an old encyclopaedia. Ange Goudard was the son of a Marseilles government official. He travelled a great deal, especially in Italy, and died in poverty in London in 1786. He wrote books on any and every subject, always in a spirit of criticism. His wife Sara was born in London. She too died in poverty, but in Paris, about 1800. Among other works she published "Remarques sur la

Musique et la Danse, ou Lettre à Milors Penbrocke." (Paris 1775). This work was included in the "Oeuvres Mêlées", published in two volumes in Amsterdam in 1777.

For us Madame Sara Goudard is chiefly interesting for her eye-witness accounts of ballets which were produced in Italy. Her vivid criticisms are a real report of the contemporary theatre.

Here she is at Venice during the Carnival season, 1773: At the S. Benedetto theatre "Didon Abandonnée" was presented. She criticised the extravagant libretto and mime, which were equalled by the exhibition of technical virtuosity. A dancer, related Madame Goudard, tried hard in a *grand ballet heroïque* to land on his right foot and balance on it for eight minutes, after having executed two hundred *entrechats* and as many *ronds de*

EARLY ENGLISH BALLET CRITIC

BY FERDINAND REYNA

ime is left. The *pas de deux* must be sparkling, the *pas de trois* bouncing, the *pas de quatre* turbulent. In this last the men jump over their heads, and the women show their knickers as far up as the waist. The discovery of an extraordinary step has just been made; and we have escaped to the most shaping of ages. The dancer rises and makes three successive *tours en l'air*; he must land in the place and position from which he started."

She spoke with equal admiration of Signora Baccelli, an Italian dancer who was then the rage of London, and whose portrait had been painted by Gainsborough.

The following year Sara Goudard was at Naples. In the ballet *Alessandro nelle Indie*, music by Piccini, choreography by Le Picq, Madame Binetti danced a minuet with much grace. Sara Goudard thought it somewhat exaggerated in Le Picq's ballet *Hypermetre* when forty-nine women killed forty-nine men in unison! Noverre's ballet *Alceste* (in the opera of *Artaxerces*), which has been revised by Viganò and produced by Le Picq, she found mediocre.

At the Pergola Theatre, Florence,



Signora Baccelli in the ballet
"Les Anans Surpris"

in the same year, Sara Goudard criticised the ballet *L'orphenin de la Chine*, and on the same occasion wrote that Noverre's ballets were too philosophical, and that "no one dances and everyone walks." She also saw Angiolini's *Semiramis* at the same theatre; a poster was used to explain that incest was to take place! Signor Campioni "executed this ballet in his own manner, avoiding the *tours de force* of overdone mime and acrobatic technique. *Grand ballet*", wrote Sara Goudard, "is danced from the waist up." Madame Campioni was gifted for the dance in the grand

Here are some additional notes about the Goudars (omitting the "d") found in some rare British Museum books, by Gladys Lasky

The standard biography of Ange Goudard is called "Un aventurieri francese." He was by turns card-sharper, informer and gambler, and lived on his wits—and his wife. Nevertheless Ange was born of a good family in Montpellier about 1720. His brother wrote the "Grammaire de l'honnête homme."

In London, in 1763, he introduced his friend and colleague Casanova to all the well-known courtesans, notably Kitty Fisher. The sixteen-year-old Irish beauty, Sara, a serving maid in an ale-house, he kept for himself. A year later they went off to Paris. They were refused permits to stay in Vienna as they could furnish no legal proof of their marriage. According to Casanova, Ange said that he *did* marry Sara later on. During their two-year stay in Venice Sara learned to sing, and was able to pass as a lady on their arrival in Naples.

Ange and Sara made numerous visits to Tuscany, where they became friendly with a Russian naval officer, Orlov, a connoisseur of fine things, especially women. The "Relation Historique des Divertissements du Carnaval de Naples", published at Lucca in 1774, has as subtitle "Lettre de Madame Goudard sur ce sujet à Monsieur le Général A. Orlov."

The Goudard palace in Naples was a fashionable salon for many years, until the Queen discovered proof that the King, Ferdinand IV, had arranged an

manner, having youth, a good figure and beauty. In the ballet "*Soliman*" she thought Campioni was magnificent, and almost the equal of the great Pitrot. Madame Campioni, in the same ballet, was extremely beautiful and enticing.

Sara Goudard thought Italian dancing was as lively as Italian music. The French danced sedately—Camargo, Sallé, Dupré, Vestris, —because their music was solemn. Nevertheless, the best Italian dancers went to Paris for instruction in the graceful French dances. She wrote much more of interest on the Italian ballet of the period. We have quoted the essence of it because we found this English critic's accounts so lively. She spoke only of what she had seen, and her opinions lead us to think that perhaps she had once been a dancer.

amorous rendezvous with Sara; this liaison and gambling had maintained their lavish standard of living. Although recounted by Casanova, there appears to be no more than a vestige of truth in this story, since Benedetto Croce, the eminent historian, has found a contemporary manuscript which mentions the Queen's jealousy. They were given three days to leave the Kingdom.

They went to Tuscany, but were exiled from that State too, after Ange had been in prison. He then went to London and Sara to Paris. Ange was certainly dead by 1787, the year of a letter from Casanova in which he wrote at length of his former friend. Casanova asserted that since Sara was so uneducated that she could not even write English, far less French, the books issued under her name were in reality written by her husband, who used the drawing power of Sara's beauty to sell the books. "Sara could only sing and deceive!" This assertion is supported by the fact that the "Remarques sur la Musique et la Danse" were originally published in Venice in 1773, as "Lettre de Mr. G . . . à Milord Pembroke."

About 30 books were issued under the names of Ange or Sara Goudard, varying from theatre to political history. In 1783 Sara asked Casanova to see her in Paris. She was about 30 and he 58. One can imagine the kind of life she was leading. Her date of death is given variously as 1794 and 1800.

International Ballet to Dance in Roman Arena . . .

ORIGINALLY built by the Roman Emperor Diocletian nearly two thousand years ago for just as spectacular but undoubtedly a much more violent purpose than ballet, the Arena di Verona in Italy is to be the scene, from August 9-17, of six full-length ballet performances. The International Ballet has been invited by the Municipality of Verona to present six performances in the Arena as part of the open-air opera season.

They will perform *The Sleeping Princess*, *Swan Lake*, and Leonide Massine's *Gaiete Parisienne*, and on the same evenings as the latter a new production of *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

Mona Inglesby will lead the Company, partnered by Ernest Hewitt with Claudie Algeranova and Helene Armfelt as supporting ballerinas. Other principals

include Algeranoff, Denys Palmer, Errol Addison, Herida May, Sophia Trant, Joyce Gearing, Vladimir Kalichevsky, June Summers and Bridget Kelly. The Company will total 65 artistes and 10 technical and administrative staff. The Verona orchestra, numbering 140 players, the largest ever to be used for ballet performances, will be conducted by James Walker, assisted by Anthony Baines.

The invitation came after Nicolas Benois, artistic director for the Verona Opera Festival, had attended a performance of the International Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall last summer. He was greatly impressed with the ballets presented on the specially designed open-stage and he recommended the engagement of the Company for the 1952 season. This will not only be the first time that a British ballet company has been seen in the 30,000-seater arena, but also the first time any ballet company of comparable size and standing has been seen anywhere in Italy.

The stage of the Arena di Verona is probably one of the largest in the world (approximately 120 ft. by 90 ft.) and as there are no ballet decors in existence suitable for such an arena, M. Benois has decided to collaborate with Mr. Dennis Wreford—who was responsible for the Royal Festival Hall decors—to design and build special sets for this season. Special equipment is

being sent out from this country, as lighting on the scale planned for the International Ballet performances has never been attempted in the Arena.

The Arena was first used by the Municipality of Verona in 1913 for an opera festival to commemorate the death of the composer Verdi. With lapses during war-years, the festival has taken place annually since.

Pilot Writes Ballet

Captain Adriaan Viruly, Chief Pilot of K.L.M. Royal Dutch Airlines, is the author of a new ballet for children called *The Snowman*. The music has been compiled and adapted from Dutch children's music and folk songs by Coby van Egmond Lankester, and the choreography is by Albert Mol. This ballet was first performed in Amsterdam on April 19 by the Scapino Ballet Company.

The ballet is a modern fairy tale. Children build a snowman, and because of a wish made on a shooting star by one of the children (according to an ancient Continental children's belief, a sincere wish made on a shooting star will come true) the inanimate lump of snow is brought to life, but only for one



(Photo: Frank Sharman)

The International Ballet in *Le Lac des Cygnes*, one of the works they will perform in Verona.

year. The story follows him through the four seasons, happily enjoying the company of the children, celebrating among other features Queen Juliana's birthday.

As autumn progresses, the tempo of the ballet slows down with increasing sadness and the children realise that their friend's life is drawing to a close. However, in a celebration with the king of the season, the winter king, the snowman is reprieved since the king considers the snowman now much wiser and more fitted to be king than he and abdicates in his favour! The ballet ends with the coronation of the snowman.

Rowena Jackson will dance the ballerina in *Scenes de Ballet* for the first time on June 2. This is the second leading role she has danced with the Sadler's Wells Ballet—the first was in *Ballet Imperial*.

The Continental Ballet Company is to dance in the City of Canterbury's 1952 Festival. They will perform each evening at 7.15 and Wednesday and Saturday at 2.30 from July 28-August 2.

Ballet Rambert will perform at the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen on July 8.

Two of the operas (*Idomeneo* and *Macbeth*) in the Glyndebourne Opera Season, June 18-July 20, will include ballet. Pauline Grant will produce the ballets.

WHAT'S ON AT EDINBURGH

As announced in our April issue, three ballet companies will take part in the Edinburgh Festival, which is to be held this year from August 17 to September 6. All will perform at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, every evening at 7.30, and 2.30 matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

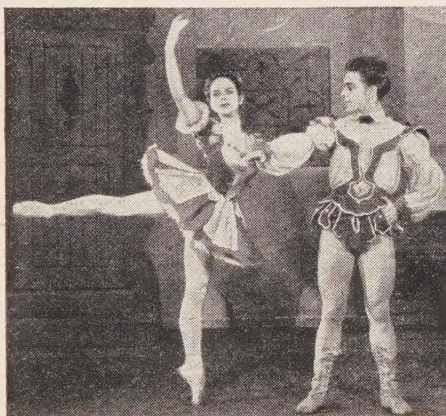
Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet opens on August 17 playing *Coppelia* on August 17-20 and *Les Rendezvous*, *Reflection* and *Pineapple Poll* on August 21-23.

New York City Ballet follow on August 25, playing *Swan Lake*, Act II, *The Cage*, *Bourrée Fantasque* and *Bayou* (first performance in Great Britain on August 25) on August 25-27 and *The Firebird*, *Ballade*, *Galaxy* and *The Pied Piper* (first performance in Great Britain August 28) from August 28-30.

The third week Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas take over and their programme will include *Prisoner of the Caucasus* and *Tarasiana* on September 1-3 and *Night Shadow* and *Enchanted Mill* on September 4-6.

Real Stage for Festival Hall

THE Festival Ballet will open a six-week season at the Festival Hall on July 31 and will dance on a stage specially built for the purpose. The stage, which will be built on the orchestra dais, will consist of a complete proscenium, tabs and drapery. It will be the property of the Festival Ballet Company and will be taken down when the season ends.



(Photo: Denis de Marney)

Maryon Lane and Pirmin Trecu as Swanilda and Frantz in "*Coppelia*," in which they will dance at the Edinburgh Festival.

New Cranko Ballet

REFLECTION, the new ballet which John Cranko has created for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, will be performed for the first time on August 21 at the Edinburgh Festival. This is the first time this company is taking part in the Festival.

The ballet is a tragedy of an egoist who creates his own world as he wills it to be and then cannot escape from it. The chief characters are Echo which will be played by Elaine Fifield and Narcissus by David Poole. Patricia Miller and Pirmin Trecu have roles as the lovers and Sheila O'Reilly and Donald Britton will play the children. The music of the ballet, which runs for just under thirty minutes, has been written by John Gardner. Keith New is responsible for the scenery and decor.

The new ballet will be seen in London early in the 1952-53 season at Sadler's Wells, which opens in the last week of August.



American film star and dancer Gene Kelly and producer of his films, M.G.M.'s Arthur Freed, were at Covent Garden on May 20 and 21 specially to see Margot Fonteyn and Violetta Elvin and, we hear, visited them after the performances!

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET	June 11	<i>Coppelia</i>			
June 10	Scenes de Ballet	June 13	<i>Khadra</i>	June 30	<i>Pineapple Poll</i>
	<i>Daphnis and Chloe</i>		<i>Harlequin in April</i>		<i>Les Rendezvous</i>
	<i>Checkmate</i>		<i>Pineapple Poll</i>		<i>Harlequin in April</i>
June 12 (gala)	<i>Checkmate</i>	June 14 (matinee)	<i>Khadra</i>	July 2	<i>Pineapple Poll</i>
	<i>Daphnis and Chloe</i>		<i>Assembly Ball</i>		<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i>
	<i>Bonne-Bouche</i>		<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>		Act II
June 14 (matinee)	Scenes de Ballet		<i>Facade</i>		<i>The Rake's Progress</i>
	<i>Giselle</i>	June 16	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> ,		<i>Jota Toledana</i>
June 17 (gala)	<i>Les Patineurs</i>		Act II		<i>Tritsch-Tratsch</i>
	<i>Giselle</i>		<i>The Haunted Ballroom</i>	July 4	<i>Facade</i>
June 18 (gala)	<i>Les Patineurs</i>		<i>The Prospect Before Us</i>		<i>Assembly Ball</i>
	<i>Giselle</i>	June 18	<i>Assembly Ball</i>		<i>The Rake's Progress</i>
June 21 (matinee)	<i>Coppelia</i>		* <i>The Rake's Progress</i>	July 5 (matinee)	<i>Pineapple Poll</i>
June 21 (evening)	<i>Ballabile</i>		<i>Pineapple Poll</i>		*First performance.
	<i>Giselle</i>	June 20	<i>Khadra</i>	END OF SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET SEASON	
June 27	<i>Checkmate</i>		<i>The Rake's Progress</i>		
	<i>Daphnis and Chloe</i>		<i>Assembly Ball</i>		
	<i>Bonne-Bouche</i>	June 21 (matinee)	<i>Coppelia</i>		
June 28 (matinee)	<i>Ballabile</i>	June 23	<i>Les Rendezvous</i>		
	<i>Symphonic Variations</i>		<i>The Rake's Progress</i>		
	<i>A Mirror for Witches</i>		<i>Pas de Trois</i>		
June 28 (evening)	<i>Ballabile</i>		(<i>Swan Lake</i>)		
	<i>Symphonic Variations</i>	June 25	<i>Facade</i>		
	<i>A Mirror for Witches</i>		<i>Khadra</i>		
June 30 July 5	<i>The Sleeping Beauty</i>		<i>The Rake's Progress</i>		
END OF SADLER'S WELLS BALLET SEASON			<i>Jota Toledana</i>		
SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET			<i>Tritsch-Tratsch</i>		
June 9	<i>Pastorale</i>	June 27	<i>Les Rendezvous</i>		
	<i>Pineapple Poll</i>	June 28 (matinee)	<i>Coppelia</i>		
	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> ,		<i>Pastorale</i>		
	Act II		<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i>		
			Act II		

INTERNATIONAL BALLET

June 19-26	Royal Court, Liverpool
June 2, 9, 16	Gaiety, Dublin
June 23-30	Grand Opera House, Belfast
July 7	Theatre Royal, Birmingham
July 14	Theatre Royal, Nottingham
August 4	Verona

BALLET RAMBERT

Two weeks commencing June 16
Theatre Royal, Windsor

Meet Violetta Elvin

by ELKA ALVAREZ

THERE have been many English ballet dancers who have, for the stage, changed their names to Russian ones, but there is, I think, only one Russian dancer who has changed her name to an English one! When Violetta Vasilevna Prokhorova came to England in 1945 she found that few people over here could spell—or pronounce—her name. So when she joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1946 she decided it would be much simpler if she took an English name—and Violetta Elvin was born!

But let us start at the beginning of her story. She was born in Moscow. Her father, Vasili Prokhorov (Violetta's middle name is the feminine form of her father's first name as is customary in Russia), was a civil pilot and is now an engineering inventor. Her mother, Irena Grimouzinskaga, is a photographer and artist. Violetta is their only child and since both her parents were very interested in ballet, they naturally wanted her to study it. And when she was six they took her to see her first performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*. "I do not remember the name of the ballerina but I do remember who danced Prince Florimund because he looked extremely handsome on the stage. It was Gabovich, the famous Russian dancer." Violetta told me with a twinkle in her brown eyes.

When she was 8½ she joined the ballet school of the famous Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and remained a pupil there until she was 17. Then because of the war, she was evacuated, with her parents, to Tashkent in Asia and she danced at the theatre there for some months as a ballerina, taking many leading rôles foremost among them that of Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake*. The Bolshoi Theatre itself was also forced to evacuate and when it eventually set-

tled in Kuibyshev, Violetta was invited to join the company. She stayed with them while they were in Kuibyshev and after they returned to Moscow and then, after a year with the Company, was given the chance to dance as a leading soloist at the Stanislavsky Theatre. Though this is a smaller theatre than

artist she was invited to join the Company and has stayed a happy member of it ever since. Two of the leading parts she danced in those early days were the Betrayed Girl in *The Rake's Progress* (which has remained one of her favourites) and La Bolero in *Les Sirenes*.

Living now in Knightsbridge, Violetta finds time for one or two unusual hobbies. She is a keen—and accomplished—chess player and she collects Chinese ivories! "Only finance" she assured me "prevents my collection of the latter being much bigger than it is!" She finds all fine art a delight and especially loves going round art museums—and doesn't seem to worry about the effect on her feet! She is an outdoor girl, too, and like all good dancers an enthusiastic athlete—table tennis, swimming, and volley ball are her favourite sports.

Our radiant picture on the front cover and one of those on the opposite page show Violetta in a dancing scene from her first film "Twice Upon a Time" (produced and directed by Emeric Pressburger who produced "The Red Shoes") in which she has a bigger acting part than a dancing one. She enjoyed making the film and, in the future, would not mind acting in another one but films, she says, could never take the place of the theatre for her, nor acting replace dancing in her affections. "You give yourself completely to the theatre" Violetta feels, "in a way you can never do when film-making."

Prima ballerina Violetta Elvin owes much of her success to her concentration on practice. If she has no performance in any day she usually attends a class and a rehearsal. When preparing to dance a major role, she spends hours in rehearsal working out the details of it. "One can never get enough work and improvement," she says, "there is always so much to do—so many little points to get right. It is most important to practise in a studio—you can work out characterisations at home, but the real work must be done in the studio where there is a teacher to correct you, a pianist, and plenty of space."

How does she create a new role? "I try to learn the steps, of course, to begin with. Then a try to grasp the choreographer's intentions behind the

(Continued on page 17)

ROLES VIOLETTA ELVIN HAS DANCED SINCE 1946

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

Le Lac des Cygnes:	Czardas, Pas de Trois, Odette-Odile, and Le Lac des Cygnes Acts II and III separately
The Sleeping Beauty:	Princess Florine (Bluebird), Fairy of the Crystal Fountain, Aurora
Giselle:	Giselle
Cinderella:	Cinderella, Summer
Les Sylphides:	Lead
Ballet Imperial:	Lead
Don Quixote:	Dulcinea/Aldonza Lorenzo
Les Patineurs:	White Skater
The Rake's Progress:	The Betrayed Girl
Daphnis and Chloe:	Lykanion (created role)
Ballabile:	Lead (created role)
Symphonic Variations:	Lead
Les Sirenes:	La Bolero
Coppelia:	Dawn
Three-Cornered Hat:	The Miller's Wife
Carnaval:	Columbine
Don Juan:	La Mort Amoureuse
Checkmate:	Black Queen
La Boutique	
Fantasque:	The Cossack Girl
Clock Symphony:	The Mandarin's Wife
Tiresias:	The Female Tiresias

MARKOVA-DOLIN COMPANY

(As temporary Guest Artist June 1950)

Swan Lake Act II:	Odette
Casse Noisette:	Grand Pas de Deux and Grand Finale partnered by Anton Dolin

TELEVISION

Swan Lake Act II:	Odette
Giselle:	Variation from Act I
The Dying Swan:	Solo
Les Sylphides:	Lead
Swan Lake	Pas de Deux (with John Field)
Acts II and III	

the Bolshoi, Violetta accepted the invitation and stayed there for some months.

In 1945 Violetta Prokhorova came to England, arriving just in time for Christmas, and in 1946 she joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet in their first season at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as guest artist. The first role she danced was that of Princess Florine in the Blue Bird *pas de deux* in *The Sleeping Beauty* with Harold Turner. After a few months as guest

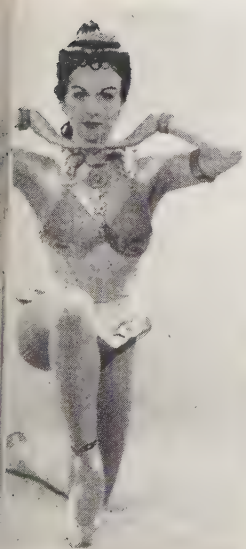


(Photo: Maurice Seymour)

These photographs of Violetta Elvin show her in several moods, and illustrate clearly how versatile a dancer and interpretive artiste she is. Compare her expression and presentation in the three roles depicted and notice the naturalness and unusual beauty of the 'off-duty' portrait (above) which was taken in New York on the Sadler's Wells Ballet's last tour.



(Photo: Dudley Harris)



(Derek Allen)



Above left) as the female "Tiresias." (Centre) the Miller's Wife in "The Three Cornered Hat." (Right) this fairylike photograph shows Violetta in "Life Story" the ballet in which she dances in her first film "Twice Upon a Time."

PICTURE PAGE

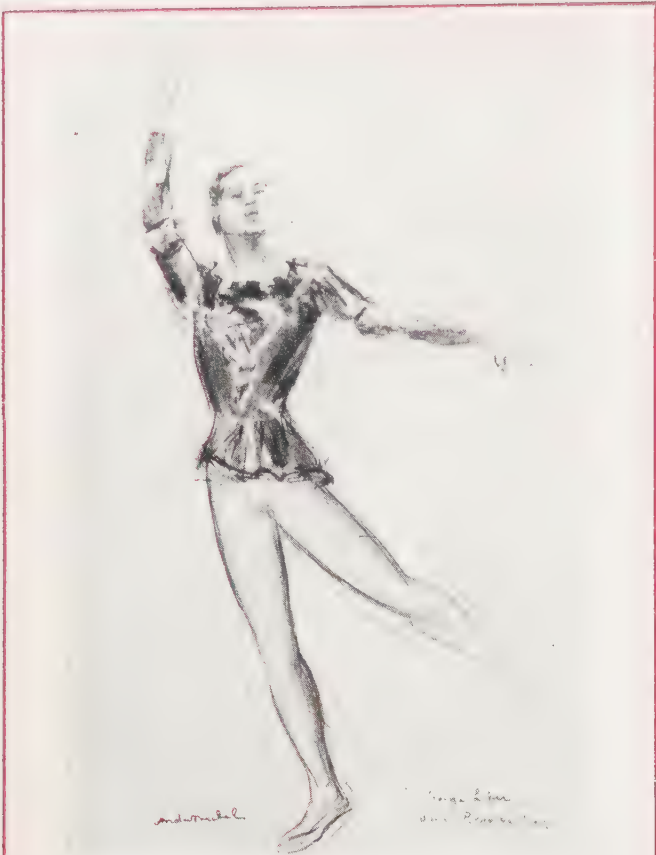
★ ★ ★

WE are glad to be able to offer readers yet another exclusive "Ballet Today" service. Photographic copies of these charming Andre Michel drawings are now obtainable from "Ballet Today" at 5/- per 5 ins. x 7 ins. print (plus postage). Our complete published series will be available including the three published in the May issue. When writing, please quote issue and subject.

★ ★ ★

(Below left) Mona Inglesby and Ernest Hewitt of International Ballet in a scene from "Gaiete Parisienne." (Below right) Festival Ballet soloist Belinda Wright in a dainty pose from "Harlequinade."

(Photo: Roy Round)



(Photo: J. Willemin)

In this recent drawing, Andre Michel has depicted Serge Lifar in the role of the huntsman in his ballet "Blanche-Neige." This was first produced at the Paris Opera in November, 1951. More conventional than his other recent ballets, with a better score it would possibly become a "classic."

Lifar received his early training from Nijinska, and was a soloist of the Diaghilev company. Critics have praised him, in the classical repertoire, as a dancer; and condemned his departure from classicism as a choreographer. This rebel has even discarded music and composed solely on rhythms.

G.L.

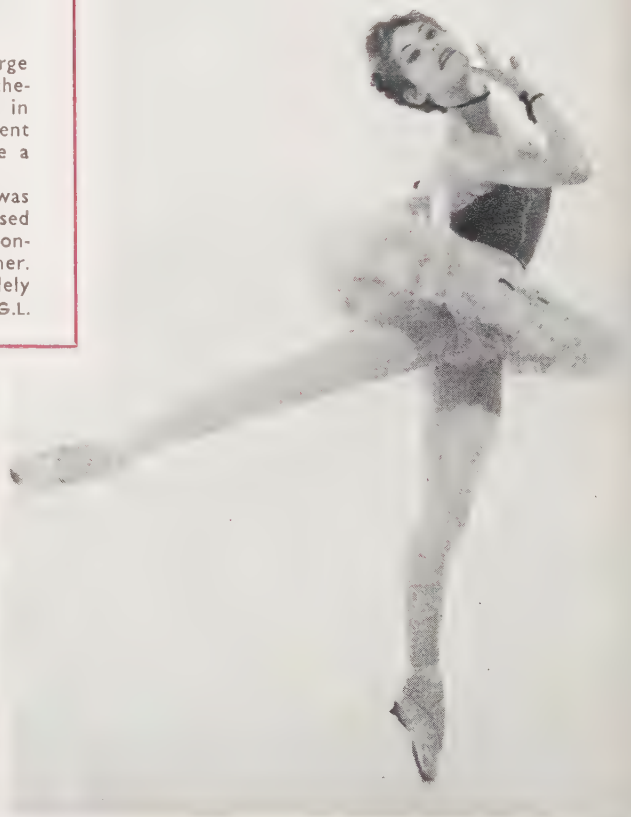




Photo: Derek Allen)

It is difficult to believe that this very peaceful portrait of Beryl Grey (above) is of the same girl as that of her in "Dante Sonata" taken by Maurice Seymour in New York.



(Photos: Derek Allen)

NADIA RETURNS TO SOUTH AFRICA

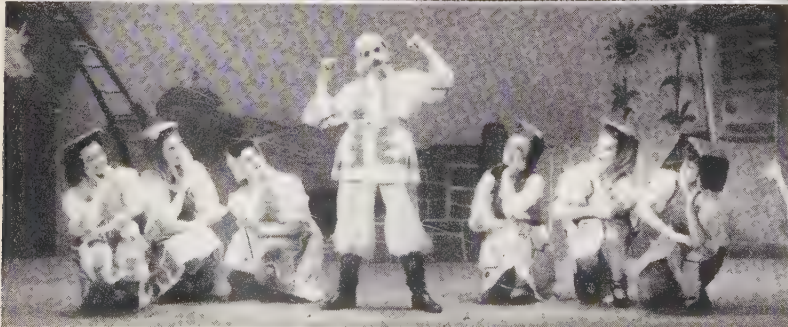
NADIA NERINA, 24-year-old South African ballerina of the Sadler's Wells Ballet—seen here as Swanilda in "Coppelia"—has not been home to South Africa since she came to England to join the Sadler's Wells School as a student seven years ago. At the time of going to press, she was due to fly home in the Jet Comet on May 30 (surely the first ballet dancer to do so?) for a three months' holiday. With her goes fellow South African Alexis Rassine who last went home in 1947—both come from Cape Town. While in South Africa, they will dance Siegfried and Odette-Odile in "Le Lac des Cygnes," with ballet companies in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, East London and possibly elsewhere. With each company, they will be responsible for the production of the ballet.

Until we welcome them back to England, two good memories that will remain with ballet lovers are Nerina's delightfully humorous mime when she took over the role of the daughter in "Bonne-Bouche" on May 20 and Rassine's splendid partnership to Violetta Elvin's "Giselle" on May 16.

DANCERS IN



Here are some of Rosario Hudson's fascinating "dancers in miniature." (Above) Pavlova in "The Dying Swan." (top left) Danilova in "Beau Danube." (top right) Markova and Dolin in "Giselle." (below) Carmen Amaya and partner.



★ ★ ★

Guest dancers Elaine Fifield and David Poole (in the leading roles) take their bows with members of the corps de ballet in the Bristol Ballet Club's production of "Le Lac des Cygnes."

Members of the Bristol Ballet Club in their original ballet, "There's No Fool," with choreography by Dorothy Woods and decor by Joseph Woods. The music is by Shostakovitch.

MINIATURE

by ROSARIO HUDSON

WHEN I was a young girl my greatest ambition was to be a ballet dancer. That dream was, never realised and the models of dancers you see here, are the outcome of that unfulfilled dream! You see, since I could not be a dancer, I decided to sketch and create them—if only in felt and other fabrics—myself.

Having previously studied both drawing and ballet-dancing, I found the studies very helpful, later, in making lightning sketches of the dancers and in the modelling and drawing of my figures.

To readers who are too young to remember the seasons of Russian Ballet at Covent Garden in the nineteen-thirties, some of the models illustrated may have a rather pre-war atmosphere. This is easily explained, because it was during the Russian Ballet seasons of the nineteen-thirties, that the original designs for the figures were made. And it was during this period, too,

that I had the good luck to meet Alexandra Danilova who proved to be a true fairy godmother to me—often taking me backstage, where I was allowed to watch the dancers in action at rehearsal. And there I would sketch them in their varying lovely poses, as I sat—literally “backstage”—on a huge roll of druggot.

Sometimes Danilova would find me a seat in the front of the theatre, from which a full-dress rehearsal could be watched. And if the great Russian ballerina was not performing herself in this particular ballet, she would sit in the next stall, explaining this and that, while busily reinforcing the toe of a ballet-shoe.

I shall never forget those days and the drawings made and the ideas gleaned in this fascinating manner had concrete results. The sketches developed first, into small, painted figures of the leading dancers; Massine, Danilova, Baronova, and many others. These were

shown on the book-stall in the foyer of the Royal Opera House for four consecutive ballet seasons, and many were bought by ballet lovers during the intervals.

When war came, artists' materials were practically unobtainable. I had the idea of making the figures shown here from fabrics—the only materials available. And these “dancers in miniature” had their war-work to do, like everyone else; appearing at exhibitions in aid of war-charities—at one of which, the merry little figure of Danilova narrowly escaped bombing!

Their last public appearance was during the Festival of Britain. Each figure has more than one change of costume, and its little personal history is given. A large “not for sale” notice always accompanies their public appearances, for in spite of many offers to buy I could never sell them—I have shared too many adventures with them!

I hope that in the future I may have the opportunity to study members of the Sadler's Wells Ballet closely enough to make models of them too and then Margot Fonteyn, Beryl Grey, Moira Shearer, Violetta Elvin, and other British dancers of merit from our own National Ballet will join my company of “dancers in miniature”.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Theatre Ballet Clubs No. 2

Their Members Became Professional

Proudest boast of the seven-year-old Bristol Ballet Club is that two of its former members—Donald Cotton and Robert Lunnon—are now members of the Sadler's Wells Companies.

The Club was formed in 1945 and is open for dancers and non-dancers in all the branches of art which ballet embraces. Ballet mistress and producer Mrs. Dorothy Woods who, with Miss Kathleen Maddocks, now the President, was instrumental in forming the Club. Each year since the Club's inception, Mrs. Woods has produced a full-length ballet performance including original ballets.

A monthly class or lecture is held for members and such well-known per-

sonalities as Mme. Rambert, Kurt Jooss, Miss Peggy van Praagh, Arnold Haskell and Algeranoff have visited the club. Latterly a course of Spanish dancing was given by Mme. Lelargia and Bert Stimmel has also given a class on modern ballet. A weekly class is given by the ballet mistress under the aegis of the Education Authorities who have provided all facilities. This has proved to be a tremendous financial assistance to the Club.

There have been the usual trials and tribulations experienced by most clubs with regard to members attending rehearsals irregularly. But a great incentive (resulting in more regular attendance) has been the inclusion in each production of one of the classical ballets, with guest artists invited to dance the principal roles. Last year *Swan Lake*, Act II, was performed with Elaine Fifield and David Poole as guests. *Les Sylphides* was chosen this year and Domini Callaghan and Michel de Lutry were the principals.

A feature of all productions has been the decor, for the most part designed and executed by Joseph Woods.

During the last seven years, the dancing activities of the Club have been many. Visits and performances have been given at Clevedon and Swindon and in many parts of Bristol. Dances have been provided for such operas as *The Bartered Bride* for local societies, as well as the *Faery Queen* and at present rehearsals are in progress for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Song of Norway*. In addition, lectures and demonstrations are frequently given by the dancing members and the ballet mistress to other societies around and in Bristol.

Membership fee is £1.1.0 per annum for dancing members and 10/6d. for non-dancers. Patrons include Dame Ninette de Valois, Lord Methuen, Arnold Haskell and P. J. S. Richardson, Vice-President is G. B. L. Wilson and Hon. Secretary is Mrs. Sybil K. Bain, 1 Greville Road, Bristol, 3. (Tel.: 63394).

THIS month we present the first edition of YOUTH-PAGES and we feel sure that our younger readers, especially the students among them, will appreciate the specially selected news, features and illustrations. But we hope that our

other readers will not pass over these two pages under the mistaken impression that their contents are of no interest.

There will always be something in YOUTH-PAGES that everyone can enjoy !

Keep Fit When You're Dancing

by Donald Featherstone,
M.C.S.P.

TODAY, top line ballet dancers are the physical equals in every way of champion athletes and both require a high standard of both physical (and, indeed, mental) fitness. But this ruling should not apply only to the ballerina and the premier danseur, for all serious ballet dancers, male and female, expend a great deal of physical energy and spend much time in practice and preparation and physical fitness is one of the most important ingredients for success in their careers.

In any field of physical effort, preparation and practice is laid out under six main headings—balance, flexibility, agility, strength, power and stamina. Any dancer taking part in ballet who possesses all these qualities will be light, agile and able to perform movements in all directions with very little effort, and he or she will also have complete bodily control. Dancers who take the trouble to acquire these qualities will find that movements will come very much more easily, and not only will there be a marked physical improvement but also a mental gain, because well-trained people feel good, look fit and have alert eyes and clear brains.

Some dancers, of course, are "born to it", they go from strength to strength and reach the top rank, and they possess a very high degree of nervous control over their movements, a gift not held by more than one person in a million. It is possible however, for the average dancer to compensate for that deficiency of nervous control, by progressive physical training. That vital matter of timing, for example, can be

vastly improved by training.

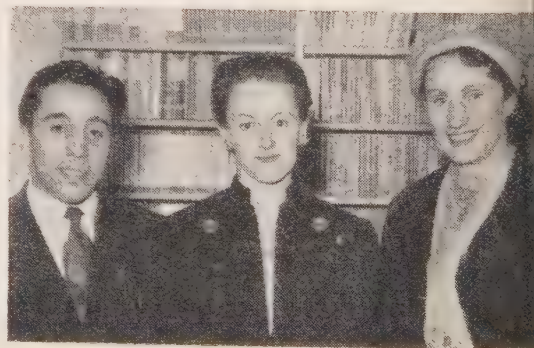
Ballet practice obviously involves a certain amount of physical training, but a further planned programme is well worth while. Ten minutes spent each night and morning in the garden or in front of an open window will work wonders, general exercises of a suppling or loosening-up type are required, performed in a swinging, rhythmic fashion. The legs, of course, will receive the bulk of your attention, easy skipping will improve agility and breathing, light on-the-spot rhythmic jogging or bouncing type exercises also foot the bill. Arise a little earlier and walk where previously public transport was used—in fact make a point of having a steady, brisk walk each day. Another method of achieving fitness is by means of games, such pastimes as squash or badminton being ideal.

If physical training promises so much in raising the standard of our performance and preventing us from tiring, why then it is so ignored? Is it because we need a literal "kick in the pants", is it because of lack of realisation, or is it because, like education, the benefits are mostly in the future? The first day of a training programme will leave the muscles sore, because the muscular system doesn't like the extra burden. But after the tenth day, if we stick it that long, little or no stiffness is felt, because the body has become more efficient. After a month or six weeks, many adjustments have been made, improvements are noted in the nerves, circulation, breathing, the muscles have become more shapely and firmer, fat has gone and the digestion has improved. We feel younger because our bodies are more active. Exercise improves the circulation and the better your body cells are washed by the blood, the younger they stay.

Remember, you don't grow old—you just stop growing!

FELICITY GRAY Gives Talk at Hatchards

Miss Felicity Gray, producer of the Television series "Ballet for Beginners" and author of the book of the same name, recently gave a talk on ballet in Hatchard's Bookshop in Piccadilly, London, to an enthusiastic young audience. Our picture shows her in Hatchards with Michel de Lutry and Domini Callaghan (centre), principal dancers of the Television programme. Miss Gray described the trials and tribulations which went to the making of the book and told how the proofs arrived for correction just as she was helping to launch the London Theatre Ballet at



Eastbourne, as Artistic Director ! She gave some good advice both to those who want to enjoy watching ballet and to those who wish to take it up as a career, and after her talk answered questions from members of the audience.

Ballet School in Naples



These young pupils of the San Carlo Theatre Ballet School, Naples, were photographed after the annual examinations, which take place in March. The school was reopened in March, 1960, after a lapse of almost a century; and the pupils accepted were beginners, with only two or three exceptions. They have four lessons a week, after school hours, for the first two

years of their training. For the succeeding six years the number will be increased to one per day, excluding Sunday. Although the girls are wearing blocked shoes they do not learn "pointe" work until the third year of training. Their teacher is Bianca Gallizia, who was trained at La Scala, Milan, where she afterwards became "prima ballerina assoluta."

DEVELOPMENT OF DANCE STEPS

— Talk at R.A.D. Production Club

An educative and entertaining lecture-demonstration was presented on May 2 at the Royal Academy of Dancing Production Club. Joan Wildeblood examined the development of dance steps from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and the steps and dances were demonstrated by students of the R.A.D. Teachers' Training Course. From time to time, Claud Newman interrupted to point out how a step of the classical ballet had evolved from these social-dance steps, and this, too, was demonstrated by a scholar. It was refreshing to see dances which were taken from sources other than Arbeau, Rameau and Feuillet—it must be admitted that the Italian sources have provided more lively material.

Most amusing were the false positions (e.g. with the feet turned *in*) which once existed, along with the five positions of the feet as still used. In motion they proved to be a familiar friend—the Charleston! No less striking was the Canaries, an anomaly, surely, at the sedate Spanish court. It was

reputedly dropped because the continual stamping caused gout! Since it was very similar to the seductive dances of Rosario and Antonio, we would suggest that other motives caused its decline! The Allemande, with its simple foot-work and intricate arm movements, was in many ways the most charming dance shown. The exquisite costumes, either authentic or authentic copies, were from the collection of Miss Valerie Prentiss.

G.L.

SADLER'S WELLS SCHOLARSHIPS

The London County Council have arranged to give six scholarships to the Sadler's Wells School and auditions will be held in June to make selections. The six pupils chosen will go to the school on probation for one year. A large number of applications have been received from parents whose children have a special aptitude for ballet but the parents of those chosen will have to be prepared to make a contribution towards the cost of training.

MEET VIOLETTA ELVIN—contd.

movements, and finally I analyse the part and try to understand it, live and feel it myself so that the portrayal I ultimately give is not superficial or merely a dead copy of the choreographer's wants. But I must learn to master the technique first and create the character afterwards."

Among the many roles she has danced Violetta favours the name part in *Giselle* and *Odette-Odile* in *Swan Lake*—the latter she feels is the supreme test of a dancer. But among the modern ballets she likes to dance the Black Queen in *Checkmate* (can her love of chess have anything to do with this?) and *La Morte Amoureuse* in *Don Juan*. Recently she has very much enjoyed dancing the female *Tiresias* in the ballet of the same name. Music is very important to her. If she does not like

VIOLETTA TELEVISES

Readers who have television sets will have seen Violetta Elvin on May 30 when, in the programme "London Town" transmitted at 8.15 p.m., she was interviewed during rehearsal on the stage at Covent Garden.

the music, it makes dancing very difficult and not really pleasant. Some music Violetta finds particularly pleasing to dance to—Gavin Gordon's music for *The Rake's Progress* (in which she danced the *Betrayed Girl*) is a good example.

What does she find most difficult to do on the stage? Violetta smiled and replied sagely that sometimes the most simple-looking things are the most difficult to do!

"And now," she said, with her warm and lovely smile, "I must leave you. I am off to my class to start to practise for the role of *Giselle* which I am again to dance next week. It is not so long since I last danced *Giselle*, but in these oft-repeated roles it is very easy to know them so well that they become mechanical and all the feeling for them is lost. This must never happen. So every time I have to dance such parts after an interval of time, I must re-study them all over again as if they were new roles."

After Violetta had left me to go to her class, the room seemed still and empty and I knew that I had met not only a great dancer whose brilliance is enhanced by her modesty and her desire for continual improvement, but a very charming, warmly human and delightful personality.

Ines de Castro

IN OPERA AND BALLET

DURING its February-March season the Marquis de Cuevas Company performed a new ballet at the Casino, Cannes. It was Ana Ricarda's *Dona Ines de Castro*, and Gérard Mulys has this to say about it:

"This ballet, whose dramatic subject lent itself admirably to choreographic treatment, was interpreted by Roselle Hightower, delicate and graceful as a miniature, as Ines de Castro, Ana Ricarda as the Infanta of Navarre, Wladimir Skouratoff as the Councillor, John Taras as the King of Portugal, and George Skibine. In this ballet Skibine has found a role which suits him to perfection, that of Don Pedro. His charm and mimetic ability enabled him to create a compelling characterisation which earned him great success. The choreography seemed to me to be a little thin, with the exception of a few interesting sequences. On the other hand the music, by Joaquim Serra, emphasised the development of the plot extremely well, and contained some really beautiful passages. The decorations were by Celia Hubbard, who deserves great praise for their truly magnificent richness and choice of colour."

But this is not by any means the first time that Ines de Castro has been the subject of a theatrical piece. Let us take the account of this "dramatic subject" from the libretto of the "Musical Drama in Two Acts performed at the King's Theatre in The Haymarket" on January 22, 1799.

"The Prince Don Peter, son of Alfonso IV, King of Portugal, and heir to the Crown, fell in love with a lady of the court, named Ines, of the illustrious family De Castro, whom he secretly married, and had two children by her. The King having discovered it, was much incensed, and over-persuaded by his flattering courtiers, he consented to put Ines to death."

The libretto goes on to explain that

the above was the "true history; the rest is invented to favour the plot, which, according to the usual rules of the drama, ends happily."

At this period, the manager of the King's Theatre was Mr. Taylor, known to present ballet-goers from Ninette de Valois' ballet *The Prospect Before Us*. *The Times* inserted an advertisement of



(Photo: permission of the Raccolta delle Stampe Bertarelli, Milan.)

Antonietta Pallerini as Ines de Castro in Cortesi's ballet in 1830.

the new opera in spite of "Mr. Taylor's caprice in withdrawing the advertisements from *The Times*, because we offered a fair and just comment on his public conduct as Manager . . .".

The criticism after the first performance was fearless. "A subject originally fruitful in producing pathetic effect was, by the bungling hand of the Italian

★

Ana Ricarda as the Infanta, John Taras as the King and Wladimir Skouratoff as the Councillor in the Marquis de Cuavas Ballet's "*Dona Ines de Castro*."

(Photo: Serge Lido)

author, debased into an absolute burlesque, the ridicule of which was increased by the ludicrous action and mockheroic deportment of the singing, rhyming and chiming heroes and heroines of the piece." There were too few attendants for a royal court, Bianchi's music was too difficult, and the dresses and decorations were "strongly expressive of cold economy".

In January, 1837, another version of the opera, with music by Persiani, was presented at La Scala, Milan. The critics complained that although it had been billed as "new to Milan" there was nothing new in it! Ten years earlier a ballet on the same story had been given at La Scala, with the title *Pietro di Portogallo*. A critic reminded the choreographer, Taglioni, that the taste of the public should be considered, and that there was no need to use stories with massacres and dreadful slaughters in order to move an audience. However, in the opening scene the dances of the *corps de ballet* had been delightful, and their colourful dresses pleasing. "The sets painted by the master-hand of Sanquirico, among which were a particularly distinguished landscape, and a window which imitated to life transparency of coloured glass and the effect of rays of light, were beyond praise.

Uncowed by this adverse criticism choreographers continued to use the history of Ines de Castro as a ballet-plot. In 1833, the King's Theatre again housed this story, but this time in a danced, but mostly mimed, version, by Cortesi. The principal dancers were Marie Taglioni, who had recently created *La Sylphide* at the Paris Opéra, M. Albert, Fanny Ellsler and Pauline Leroux. But since the stories were unfolded by the mimes, and the dances were in the nature of a *divertissement*,



POT THE COSTUMES—Our Great Competition



quote from the lively account from *Spectator* in order to give a true picture of the impact made by this act.

The ballet was one of action only. It was a serious pantomime-tragedy in dumb-show. We had none of that odd mixture of dancing and pantomimic action which has so droll an effect in historical ballet—no making love in *pas de deux*, or soliloquizing in a *pas seul*; yet this performance was equally strange, and certainly more novel and striking.

The action is a series of starts timed to the music. One might almost fancy the performers to be a set of automata, a group of galvanized corpses, nothing but the extreme and really immoderate earnestness of the performers events us from thinking it a burlesque. Even that cannot repress a sense of the ridiculous; and the risibility of the audience was often excited by the unstrained violence of the actors. For instance, Inez, who was personated by me, Pallerini, the *prima donna* of the party, in resisting the efforts of Driego's officers to drag her to prison, shoves them about with all the vigour of a sturdy Lane virago. Her captors actu-

ally thrust her head-foremost in at the castle gate; indeed, we almost expected kicking and scratching would ensue. Again, Don Pedro having discovered the villainy of Driego, fairly drags him by the hair of his head—no wig would resist the tug—across the stage and flings him on the ground like a sack. Don Pedro's two children are equally gestilquent. When Papa or Mama caresses them, it is with the convulsive clutch of agony, saluting them all the while with a battery of kisses. It was not only "tearing a passion to rags, to very tatters" but stamping it to atoms afterwards.

"Pallerini's death scene would have been disgusting, had it not been ridiculous; it was an exhibition of gasping for breath. We expected to hear the death-rattle in her throat, but we remembered it was only dumb-show!

"The opening scene afforded an opportunity for an imposing display of costume and for the exertions of a numerous and efficient *corps de ballet*, the female dancers being led by Proche. Taglioni and Albert introduced a beautiful *pas de deux*, and Fanny Elsler (sic) and Pauline Leroux danced with Guerinot."

TERPSICHORE

BALLET TODAY'S unusual competition, which is open to all readers, will test the skill of balletomanes. Our artist has drawn graphic pictures of twelve characters from well-known ballets including both soloists and corps de ballet and *your* job is to guess the ballets they come from and the name of the character.

To the winner we are offering a grand prize of a ballet book or books to the value of £2/2/0 and if the winner has sent in with his or her entry the name of a new reader of "Ballet Today" together with a remittance for a year's subscription (14/-), he or she will receive an additional award of ballet books to the value of £3/3/0 (making £5/5/0 in all)!!!

Competition Rules: Winning entry will be the first correct or nearest correct solution received by "Ballet Today" before closing date.

Entries should be sent in a sealed envelope together with your name and address, to "Ballet Today," 15 Penrhyn Road, Kingston, Surrey, on or before June 26, and marked on the envelope "Spot the Costumes."

The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into with regard to the competition.

Results will be published in the August issue.

To help you, we print below the names of 24 ballets, from 12 of which the characters have been taken.

Donald of the Burthens	Spectre de la Rose
Le Lac des Cygnes	Sea Change
Prince Igor	Scheherazade
Cinderella	Harlequin in April
Miracle in the Gorbals	Symphonic Variations
Daphnis and Chloe	Petruchka
The Rake's Progress	Don Juan
Wedding Bouquet	Symphonic Impressions
Bonne-Bouche	Ballet Imperial
A Mirror for Witches	Tiresias
The Three-cornered Hat	Apparitions
Don Quixote ...	Scenes de Ballet

WHAT PARIS THOUGHT OF TWO BALLET COMPANIES

by Our Special Correspondent

THE Festival of Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century, as the international exhibition of art and thought has been called, is being held in Paris throughout the month of May. Wishing to include ballet among the exhibits, an evening of new works was presented at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées on May 7. Unfortunately, this evening of *créations*, which the Marquis de Cuevas Company had been asked to arrange, turned out to be devoid of interest.

One of the two ballets, *Cordelia*, is arranged to a rather feeble score by Henri Sauguet, with décor by Jacques Dupont. It is danced by Delores Starr, Jocelyne Volmar, Serge Golovine and John Taras, who is responsible for the gracious and poetic choreography. It is the story of a young girl, badly treated at home, who is saved by a wonderful love. The ensemble seemed lifeless because of the score.

For the other ballet, *Coup de Feu*, whose unpretentious music by Georges Auric is certainly not without charm and spirit, and whose story and decors are the work of the painter Cassandre, they thought to do well by engaging the Hungarian choreographer Aurel Milloss. It is concerned with two lovers set on fire by their passion. The fire even spreads to the firemen; then a storm restores order. Milloss's choreography had absolutely no originality, and was mediocre in the extreme. The groups were confused, and it showed, on the whole, a sad lack of imagination. It followed the music step by step, in the most academic fashion, and without any personal mark. There were, besides, reminiscences of Frank Staff's ballet created for the Ballets des Champs Elysées, *Romanza Romana*, and Massine's early works. Wladimir Skouratoff and Rosella Hightower are too good artists to be praised for their interpretations of this ballet, whose sole worthwhile feature is the music.

Fortunately Paris had some cause for rejoicing also. The arrival of the New York City Ballet was a great event, which stirred the public, the press, and the ballet world. The Company arrived at the Invalides Air Terminal on May 9, preceded by Nora Kaye, Georges Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, who arrived 24 hours earlier after their triumph in Barcelona. There was a crowd to greet their arrival, which was marked by signs of great friendliness. The New York City Ballet gave six

performances in all in Paris, between May 10-16. Then they left to give three performances in Florence during the Maggio Musicale, returning in June.

From a critical point of view, and it also happens to be a very personal one, this company must be admired for the quality of the musicians whose works are used. Too often we have seen, and still see, ballets danced to good music badly arranged, or to specially com-



Members of the N.Y. City Ballet arrive in Paris

missioned music obtained at low cost from mediocre or even insignificant composers. From Stravinsky to Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson, the New York City Ballet impresses by the calibre of its musicians.

The Company's debut at the Paris Opéra on May 10 made a great impression on an overcrowded auditorium. The programme consisted firstly of *Le Lac des Cygnes*, in Cecil Beaton's striking decors, with Maria Tallchief and André Eglevsky. This new version by Balanchine is exceptionally lucid and pure. *The Cage*, a masterpiece of interpretation by the astounding Nora



Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes in "Orpheus" which the New York City Ballet presented during its Paris season.

Kaye, is a ballet by Jerome Robbins. It deals with some of the extremely complex problems of modern psychology through examining the habits of the praying mantis, the insect which kills the male after copulation. This ballet proved too strong meat for the Opéra audience, which received it coldly; but the following night, at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, *The Cage* had a triumphant reception!

The Four Temperaments, composed to a piano concerto by Hindemith, one may salute as a masterwork of the choreographer Balanchine. In front of a plain curtain, and in practice-dress, the company dances according to personal "humours." The expression, the contrasts, the effects made with bodies and music, all seem new, and spring from a fertile and inventive mind.

Le Jardin aux Lilas, Antony Tudor's ballet created for the Ballet Rambert in 1936, has lost none of its poetic charm. This delicate reverie was interpreted by Nora Kaye, Tanaquil Leclercq, Hugh Laing and Brooks Jackson.

Caracole, based on Mozart's Divertimento No. 15, in B flat, with costumes by Christian Bérard, was danced by the entire company. The remainder of the programme presented in Paris consisted of *Orpheus*, (Stravinsky), *Till Eulenspiegel* (R. Strauss), *The Prodigal Son* (Prokofieff). Of the choreographers fostered by Diaghileff, who have produced some excellent ballets, only Georges Balanchine is working in the direction of the future; he alone gives direction to ballet.

F.R.

Gore and Hinton in Melbourne

AUSTRALIAN NEWS by EUGENE F. CUSACK

OPENING its 1952 tour in Melbourne, the National Theatre Ballet Company's season has been noteworthy for the first appearance with the company of Walter Gore and Paula Hinton. It has also seen the premiere of the new Gore ballet *Theme and Variations*, to Tchaikovsky music, and danced for the time being, experimentally, without decor. Musical in conception, its keynote is the spectacular and it appears to have been devised principally as a showpiece for Paula Hinton. There is good dancing in its *pas de deux*, and the latter is given scope for a magnificent *pas seul*. On this programme it was overshadowed perhaps, by the first Australian production of *Antonia*, which was warmly received by critics and public.

Gore's interest in mime comes strongly in his re-arranged *Le Cid*, in which he dances Alvaro. To Paula Hinton's Giselle, there is a satisfying version, though the dancers for tradition no doubt raised eyebrows, particularly at the end of Act I, and the less-successful yellow-green Act II. Hinton's handling of the mad scene emphasised her ability as a dramatic artist of fine sensibility.

The company will present the full *Swan Lake*—Henry Danton having flown from America to partner Lynne Harding, dancing the dual roles of Prince and Odile. Other ballets being performed during the season include *Le Cid*, *Graduation Ball*, *Protee*, *Les Femmes de Bois*, *Pas de Quatre* and the *Scottish Dances* with full operatic accompaniment.

The Borovansky Company, now nearing the end of its Brisbane season, is on to Perth shortly and will give a return Melbourne visit, before starting its New Zealand tour. Since its triumphal revival in Sydney last year, the company has been playing for almost eighteen months straight and, with a finely-disciplined corps-de-ballet and a strong group of principals, has proved us with the finest dancing since the visits of Basil. It is a well-drilled, well-balanced company which M. Borovansky is anxious to take abroad—to the United States and later to England.

Also abroad at the moment is the *denwieser* Ballet, exponents of modern expressionist dancing, which are on a tour of country districts in which, in many cases, they brought ballet to remote corners of rural Australia for the first time, sailed recently for a three months tour of India, the

first time an Australian company has gone there.

Ballet Guild continues to offer scope for experimental work and one of the most interesting developments in recent Australian ballet was Laurel Martyn's balletic translation of C. J. Dennis's verse-classic of lower class city life in Australia around about the first World War era—*The Sentimental Bloke*. Notable for its racey use of the idiom of the life it depicts, for its authenticity and warmly sympathetic characterization, the book lends itself to ballet interpretation and the flavour of the times and the attitudes of the social strata depicted came through well in Miss Martyn's version. Interesting, too, was the use made in costuming of the quaint Hal Gye illustrations to the original. Choreography and production were by Laurel Martyn, the script prepared by novelist Vance Palmer, with music specially written for the ballet by John Tallis.

ROUND THE GALLERIES

by Margaret Sharp

Lopokova in the Academy

One of the most striking portraits at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition at Burlington House is that of Madame Lydia Lopokova by Harold Knight. The ballerina's light brown hair, finely modelled features and expressive eyes under their well-defined eyebrows, are shown to great advantage against a background of royal blue drapery.

Sir Wm. Russell Flint portrays the fabulous dignity and beauty of Spanish women in a masterly fashion and the lovely Spanish dancer, Consuelo Carmona, is the most important figure in his enchanting "Family Group: Bernadetta, Jasmin and Consuelo". "Talking of Ballet" by John B. Souter is an attractive study of youth, while L. Campbell Taylor's "Models: living and lay"

Pilar Lopez represented the dance at the third Wiesbaden May Festival which was held this year from May 10-June 2. The Festival, an international one, includes ballet, opera and theatre and Pilar Lopez and Company gave two evening performances.



The premiere of Paul Claudel's ballet *Johanna auf den Scheiterhaufen* by Honnegger was to be performed in Mannheim at the National Theatre on June 1. Doré Hoyer was responsible for the scenic work of this ballet.



Choreographer Karl Bergeest, who was formerly in the pre-war Ballet Jooss Company, held his first "Ballet Evening" in Cologne on May 10. The programme included *The Three-Cornered Hat* and Milhaud's *Salade* which was performed at a ballet-opera with the figures of the Italian *Commedia dell'arte* (harlequin, columbine, etc.) Decor is by Walter Gondols. The soloists were Lisa Czobel, wife of Karl Bergeest, and Alexander von Swaine.



On May 22 at the Stadtische Oper, Berlin *Scenes de Ballet*, *Scheherazade* and Francais' *Le Roi Nu* (decor by Josef Fenneker and choreography by Gustav Blank) were performed. S.G.J.

affords us an unconventional glimpse of two ballet dancers ready to pose amid the clutter of an artist's studio.

Erlund Hudson's "Dancer Resting" is exquisite in colour; charming in its suggestion of fragility and yet she does not ignore the physical demands made upon a dancer and her best work is a successful synthesis of poetry and realism. She is also represented at the Spring Exhibition of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours where, in "Girl Making Ballet Skirts", the floating lightness of tulle and tarlatan is contrasted with the clean lines of chairs reflected in a polished wood floor.

At the same exhibition, Robert Austin charms us with his sensitive use of colour in "Ballet Girl with a Bouquet" and "Ballet Girl with Hoops".

You Say . . .

CAN I—on behalf of many Portuguese balletomanes and readers of your magazine and myself—distribute, if not a “bouquet of the month” at least a “posy of the Lisbon season” to some of the dancers of the Sadler’s Wells Ballet whom we have just admired at the Teatro São Carlos?

The first posy—or should it be a corbeille?—goes to the corps de ballet for its marvellous discipline, grace, enthusiasm and comprehensive collaboration with the principals; shown, especially, in *Les Sylphides*, the second and fourth act of *Swan Lake* and *Ballet Imperial*. A second posy is for Rowena Jackson who, with her short solo as the skater in blue in *Les Patineurs*, got the first big applause on opening night and warmed up the audience. The third posy goes to Brian Shaw for his virile dancing. Dame Ninette de Valois set the tempo of the whole season very well by opening with *Les Patineurs* instead of the usual *Les Sylphides* as done by previous visiting companies.

The fourth posy must go to Alexander Grant for his rendering of the Rake, which agreeably surprised the audience who were not expecting much in the field of miming from the “cold and phlegmatic English.” And a flower from this posy should go to Ray Powell for his “man with a rope.” Posies should also go to Anne Heaton and Henry Legerton for their share in *The*

Rake’s Progress. A fifth posy is for Philip Chatfield for his dancing and miming as the first red knight in *Checkmate*; and a blossom from the same offering to Leslie Edwards for his red king.

Finally, the Oporto balletomanes would like to add a posy to the many *ramos de flores* which were offered to Margot Fonteyn at the end of the last performance in that city. The local critics, unused to ballet, didn’t go or didn’t write about Fonteyn’s *Swan Lake* which closed the too short Oporto season; but the balletomanes want it to be put on paper that the almost 2,000 people who filled the Teatro Rivoli and cheered her to the echo greatly appreciated her interpretation of Odette-Odile.

Balletomanes in Portugal wish to say “au revoir” to Dame Ninette de Valois and her dancers.

YOUR LISBON CORRESPONDENT



In your May issue, your writer on Television Ballet comments unfavourably on the engagement of a foreign ballerina in connection with the recent T.V. presentation of the theme of *Swan Lake* and suggests that Christian Simpson should engage English ballerine.

With all due respect to your contributor, she is completely mistaken in the belief that English ballerine have been overlooked. In those ballet productions by Mr. Simpson during the last two years, with which I have been privileged to be associated, he has repeatedly to my knowledge invited leading English dancers to take part in them.

His gestures have not always been reciprocated with the same desire to co-operate on the part of the managements concerned. Again, sometimes dancers have been absent abroad on professional duties, or they could not be released from rehearsal. Lastly, I may add that even if such dancers were at liberty, it is doubtful if they could be engaged in any large production, because of the practically impossible conditions of performance now imposed by certain managements.

CYRIL BEAUMONT

75 Charing Cross Road,
London, W.C.2.



When the Sadler’s Wells Theatre Ballet was first formed we were told that its main function would be to act as an experimental ground for young choreographers on a smaller and less ambitious scale than the productions at the Opera House. Up till now, this policy has been adhered to and has met with outstanding success—ballet evenings in Rosebery Avenue have been marked by a youthful zest and gaiety of performance not met with elsewhere. Consequently, I view with despondency and alarm the recent announcement that the company’s next production is to be a revival of *The Rake’s Progress*.

What is the point of saddling these youngsters with such heavy Restoration pieces as *The Rake* and *The Prospects Before Us*? I think that both ballets have already had their day, but there are other talented choreographers still awaiting a chance to show what they can do. Is Cinderella henceforth to wear the cast-off clothes of her elder sister? Are all the old crocks from Covent Garden to be pensioned off at the Wells? Not if the box office customer has any say in the matter!

MARY E. ROBERTS

2 Framfield Road,
Highbury, London, N.5.

(What do other readers think?—Editor.)



I would like to congratulate you on the new presentation of your magazine. I marvelled at your April issue but the May edition is really something! I now enjoy reading all the articles in the book and the photographs have also improved—thank you for the delightful one of Margot Fonteyn. The cover is much better and I like the idea of being able to buy a photograph since most of my friends collect ballet pictures.

CHRIS SAXTON

9 Willoughby Avenue,
Long Eaton, Nr. Notts.

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Anita Landa, Louis Godfrey and Sheilagh Franklyn in "Fiesta"